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MIN. OF HEALTH

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Seaham

Urban District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1940

OF THE

HEALTH DEPARTMENT



SEAHAM :

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1941.

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Seaham Urban District Council.

Chairman, Councillor H. F. LEE, J.P.

Chairman of Health Committee, Councillor W. P. SMITH.

Members of the Council:

Councillor ARMSTRONG	Councillor McCUTCHEON
„ *BARRATT	„ McLAUCHLAN
„ *BLACKWELL	„ *PIGG
„ CLAXTON	„ *ROBINSON
„ CONN	„ *SAMPLE
„ CROW	„ SCOLLEN
„ *FERGUSON	„ *SCOTT
„ GALLAGHER	„ *SMITH
„ *GUY	„ *SNOWDEN
„ HARRISON	„ *TODD
„ *JENNINGS	„ WEBSTER
„ *KEELEÝ	„ WEETMAN
„ LAWSON	„ *WILSON
„ *LEE	„ WINTER
„ *LOWERY	„ WRIGHT
„ McCHESNEY	

* Members of Health Committee.

Officials of Health Department:

Medical Officer of Health :

J. ROLAND HETHERINGTON, L.R.C.P. & S.E., L.R.F.P. & S.G.,
D.P.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector—BATESON TURNER, C.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.,
C.S.I.

Sanitary Inspector (until 31st August, 1940)—J. D. COLLINS,
C.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., Certified Meat Inspector.

Engineer and Surveyor—J. B. ABBEY, M. INST. M. & CY. E.,
A.R.S.I.

Clerk to Health Department—JOHN R. WALLACE.

*To the Chairman and Members
of the
Seaham Urban District Council.*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Annual Report on the work of the Health Department for the year 1940 is again much abbreviated in form. It is hoped at some future date to issue all relevant information necessarily omitted from the Annual Reports for war years.

One of the outstanding features of the year under review has been the small degree to which the general upheaval of our normal daily routine has affected the health of the community. Changes of employment, changes in hours of labour, disturbed hours of rest, rationing of essential foodstuffs and the virtual disappearance of certain foods from the shops; all these, together with the unconscious strain of 'wartime tension,' have as yet produced little effect on the general physical well-being of the populace of the district.

It is interesting to note from the vital statistics (see Table One) that while the Birth Rate is higher than any year since 1936 the Infant Mortality Rate is the lowest on record. Table Two shows the Birth Rate, Death Rate and Infantile Mortality Rate for Seaham as compared with the same rates for (a) England and Wales, (b) Durham County, and (c) the smaller towns (with populations from 25,000-50,000).

Apart from an epidemic of Measles there has been no outbreak of Notifiable Disease beyond what might be anticipated. It is very gratifying that although nearly a thousand cases of Measles were reported during the year the disease has been of a mild character, no fatal case having occurred.

A glance at Table Five reveals a most satisfactory state of affairs in so far as Infectious Disease is concerned. In the case of Scarlet Fever the small number of cases reported suggests that we are approaching a period when very few of the children of the district will be immune, and, in consequence an epidemic may be looked for within the next two or three years.

Concerning Diphtheria an immunisation scheme was in operation throughout the year, when a satisfactory response to an appeal made to the schools was received. About 350 children were immunised, nearly all by the 'two injection' method. It is noted that while the response of children of school age was satisfactory, that of children under five was not so good. This is a matter for regret, as it has been found that the most 'vulnerable' age for Diphtheria is about four years.

Regarding Housing, progress is virtually at a standstill. It is, however, a matter of satisfaction that the Council is the owner of about 50 per cent. of the houses in the area.

In presenting this report I should like to pay tribute firstly, to the loyal support I have received in the course of the year from the members of the staff of the Health Department (especially in view of the unavoidable encroachment of duties connected with Air Raid Precautions and the Ministry of Food on their time and energy), and also to the sympathetic and helpful attitude of the members of the Council and Health Committee.

Yours faithfully,

J. ROLAND HETHERINGTON.

*Health Department :
1, Princess Road,
Seaham,
July, 1941.*

GENERAL STATISTICS.

(Figures in brackets refer to previous year).

Area : 2,467 statute acres.

Estimated population middle of 1940, 25,040 (29,100)

Number of inhabited houses, 5,943 (6,973)

Rateable value, £103,571 (£104,519)

Value of a Penny rate, £382 (£393)

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.—Live Births :—

		Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	..	233	207	440
Illegitimate	...	8	9	17
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		241	216	457
		(239)	(246)	(485)

Birth rate per 1,000 estimated resident population,
18.2 (16.3).

STILL BIRTHS :—

Legitimate	...	11	10	21
Illegitimate	...	0	2	2
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		11	12	23

Rate per 1,000 total births, 47.9 (41.5).

Infantile Mortality.

Infants under 1 year :—

Legitimate	...	...	14	11	25
Illegitimate	...	..	0	1	1
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
			14	12	26

Death rate of all infants under one year per 1,000 live births 56.9 (78):

Death rate of legitimate infants under one year per 1,000 legitimate live births, 56.8 (78).

Death rate of illegitimate infants under one year per 1,000 illegitimate live births, 58.8 (77).

Deaths.

	Male	Female	Total
Total Deaths	161	154	315

Death rate per 1,000 population, 12.6 (10.6)

Average age at death, 59.7 years.

Average age at death (after deducting deaths of infants under one year) 67.4 years.

	Male	Female	Total
Deaths from Puerperal Sepsis			
rate of 2.1 per 1,000 births ...	0	1	1
Deaths from other maternal causes, rate of 4.2 per 1000 births ...	0	2	2
Deaths from Cancer ...	13 (11)	16 (17)	29 (28)
Deaths from Measles ...	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Deaths from Whooping Cough ...	0 (1)	0 (1)	0 (2)
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ...	4 (0)	5 (1)	9 (1)

TABLE I.

Vital Statistics for 1940 and certain previous years.

Year	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate
1900	42.0	21.1	174
1910	36.4	14.8	122
1920	35.2	16.3	124
1930	23.0	10.5	80
1936	18.6	9.3	66.6
1937	17.2	10.3	82.9
1938	16.9	10.6	66.6
1939	16.3	10.6	78
1940	18.2	12.6	56.9

TABLE II.
Vital Statistics for 1940 and certain previous years.

	England and Wales		Smaller towns (Population 25,000-50,000)		County Rate		Seaham	
	1939	1940	1939	1940	1939	1940	1939	1940
Birth Rate ...	15.0	14.6	15.6	15.7	16.6	16.7	16.3	18.2
Death Rate ...	12.1	14.3	11.2	12.8	12.0	13.0	10.6	12.6
I. M. Rate ...	50	55	40	54	63	63	78	56.9

SANITARY CONDITIONS.

(Incorporating the Chief Sanitary Inspector's Report).

Drainage and Sewerage.—The work of what is virtually a re-sewering of the entire district commenced in May, 1939, and, in spite of many difficulties and setbacks occasioned by the War and other causes, had made considerable progress by the end of 1940. It is anticipated that the scheme will be completed during 1941.

Public Cleansing.—A scheme of controlled tipping was put into operation in the early part of the year. During the twelve months the Surveyor reported the collection of over 20,000 tons of refuse. This is equivalent to rather more than 16 cwts. per head of population, an amount considerably in excess of that collected in many other districts of similar character. A salvage scheme is in operation whereby paper, bones, tins and other salvageable material is collected, sorted, and sold.

Nuisances.—Informal notices were served by the Sanitary Inspector for the following insanitary conditions. The nuisances were all abated.

Dwelling-houses	{	Foul conditions..	..	3
and	{	Structural defects	..	3
Schools	{	Overcrowding ..	..	20
Lodging Houses ..		..	..	—
Dairies and Milkshops		..	..	—
Cowsheds ..		..	..	—
Bakehouses ..		..	..	—
Slaughter-houses		..	..	—
Ashpits and Privies		..	..	—
Deposits of Refuse and Manure		..	..	—
Water Closets ..		..	..	87
Defective Yard Paving		..	..	—
House	{	Defective Traps	..	—
Drainage	{	No Disconnection from Sewers	..	—
	{	Other faults ..	..	62
Water Supply ..		..	..	—
Pigsties ..		..	..	—
Animals Improperly Kept ..		..	..	—
Offensive Trades		..	..	—
Smoke Nuisances		..	..	—
Other Nuisances		..	..	48

Shops and Offices, etc.—All shops and all licensed premises, including public houses, cinemas, and similar places have been periodically inspected throughout the year. It is gratifying to find that the proprietors have in all cases been quite willing to undertake any improvements recommended.

Eradication of Bed Bugs.—Disinfection and disinfestation is carried out by the Local Authority. Houses are inspected and disinfested whenever necessary. This is done by (i) Powder (Kolium co.); (ii) Insecticides (Kolium co.); Cromessol soln. A and B); and (iii) Fumigation (Fumex, Kolium and Killgerm Sulphur blocks).

Council houses disinfested ... 7

Other houses disinfested ... 96

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Lousiness and Scabies.—In my work as Assistant School Medical Officer to Durham County Education Authority, as well as in the course of my duties in the general Health administration of the Urban District, I have noticed a marked increase in the amount of lousiness and also of scabies. These conditions are almost invariably associated with lack of cleanliness, and tend to produce lowered vitality (especially in children) owing to loss of sleep; in an area such as this with its large proportion of modern dwellings there is little excuse for such lack of cleanliness. Every effort is made to combat these undesirable conditions. Disinfectants are supplied free of charge by the authority, and are available for all who make application. It should be realised, however, that while disinfectants may be useful adjuncts they are not to be considered as substitutes for soap, water, and 'elbow grease.'

HOUSING.

16 new houses were completed, 15 by the Local Authority and 1 by private enterprise, and 141 old houses demolished.

The Local Authority is the owner of 2,424 houses erected under the various Housing Acts. In addition it is responsible for between 300 and 400 other houses taken over under the Compulsory Purchase Orders. The demolition of these houses is held up under instruction by the Government.

Several specifications were prepared of works necessary for the improvement of several properties in the town, but

owing to the difficulty of obtaining building materials only slow progress has been made in the repairing of the properties, and it was decided not to proceed with the scheme. Pressure is brought to bear in every case where it is felt that the owner is taking advantage of the present war-time conditions to avoid his liabilities.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply.—All farms, dairies and milk shops have been regularly inspected.

Meat and other Foods.—1379 visits were paid to the various Foodshops, Bakehouses and Slaughterhouses in the area. This number is less than in the previous year due to the centralisation of slaughtering.

Food Condemned.—115 stones of meat, including offals, 80 lb. rabbits, 7 lb. tinned meat, 6 tins cherries, 1 jar meat paste, 1 tin of milk. The amount of meat found unfit for human consumption is less than in previous years (356 stones in 1938. 680 stones in 1939); this is accounted for by the fact that the meat is inspected in the Slaughterhouse at Ryhope before dispatch to this district.

One case of suspected food poisoning was investigated during the year, but was found to be unconfirmed.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND TUBERCULOSIS.

The prevalence of, and control over, infectious diseases and Tuberculosis are indicated in the accompanying tables.

TABLE III.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

CASES NOTIFIED AT THE FOLLOWING AGES:—

Disease	Under 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	20-35 years	35-45 years	45-65 years	65 and over	Admitted to Hospital	Died	Total
Scarlet Fever ..	—	—	—	—	—	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	7
Diphtheria ..	—	—	—	—	2	11	2	2	3	2	—	—	12	2	22
Puerperal Sepsis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Erysipelas ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	1	—	—	5
Cerebro Spinal..	—	—	—	2	—	—	3	1	1	—	—	—	6	4	7
Poliomyelitis ..	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Measles	2	54	92	97	85	540	89	6	6	—	—	—	—	—	990
Whooping Cough	—	1	5	5	3	9	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	26
Pneumonia ..	2	2	4	3	3	12	4	2	4	3	10	3	—	10	52

TABLE IV.
Monthly Notifications of Infectious Diseases during 1940.

Disease	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	TOTAL
Scarlet Fever ..	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	4	—	1	—	—	7
Diphtheria ..	2	2	2	1	—	4	—	1	3	1	2	4	22
Puerperal Sepsis ..	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Erysipelas ..	1	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	5
Cerebro Spinal ..	1	—	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	7
Poliomyelitis ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Measles ..	24	5	5	35	155	163	27	14	18	60	276	208	990
Whooping Cough ..	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	5	4	5	—	26
Pneumonia ..	6	5	5	7	5	4	2	4	4	8	2	—	52

TABLE V.
Infectious Disease and Tuberculosis Cases
notified during past five years.

(Figures in parenthesis indicate number of Deaths).

Disease	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Scarlet Fever ...	109 (0)	97 (0)	60 (0)	55 (0)	7 (0)
Diphtheria ...	25 (1)	95 (15)	66 (5)	54 (4)	22 (2)
Puerperal Sepsis ...	2 (1)	3 (1)	2 (1)	4 (0)	1 (1)
Erysipelas ...	8 (0)	4 (0)	13 (0)	10 (0)	5 (0)
Cerebro Spinal Fever	—	—	4 (2)	6 (2)	7 (4)
Poliomyelitis ...	—	—	—	—	1 (0)
*Measles ...	—	—	—	101 (0)	990 (0)
*Whooping Cough ...	—	—	—	25 (2)	26 (0)
Pneumonia ...	22 (14)	54 (25)	56 (17)	64 (19)	52 (10)
T.B.—Pulmonary ...	16 (6)	26 (11)	44 (22)	21 (16)	20 (9)
T.B.—Non-Pulmonary	8 (1)	10 (6)	19 (6)	8 (7)	21 (1)

* Not notifiable prior to 1939.

TABLE VI.
TUBERCULOSIS.

Age Periods	NOTIFICATIONS				DEATHS			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-1 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-5 ..	—	—	7	—	—	—	1	—
5-10 ..	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—
10-15 ..	2	1	3	—	—	—	—	—
15-20 ..	3	2	3	1	1	—	—	—
20-25 ..	1	3	1	—	—	2	—	—
25-35 ..	3	3	—	—	1	4	—	—
35-45 ..	2	—	2	—	1	—	—	—
45-55 ..	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
55-65 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 upwards	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS ..	11	9	19	2	3	6	1	—

Diphtheria Immunisation.—A scheme has been in operation throughout the year, and a more extensive campaign is contemplated in 1941.

Disinfections.—127 houses and lots of bedding were disinfected. The disinfecting apparatus is of an obsolete pattern, and the provision of a more up-to-date system is necessary and is under consideration.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

There are 30 Power Factories and Workshops in the area, and 13 non-power Factories. All these have been inspected during the year.

PORT SANITARY AUTHORITY.

9 vessels were inspected during the year.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR HEALTH.

Every room blacked out by night should be ventilated by day.

Don't throw food scraps outside; it is not only wasteful, but it encourages rats and mice.

Where there is dirt there is danger.

You cannot keep your house too clean.

If you wish to be healthy use plenty of water, both inside and out, both for yourself and your house.

Sleep is as necessary as food, especially for children.

The most dangerous disease of childhood is diphtheria; protect yourself by being immunised.

If diphtheria you'd despise, now's the time to immunise.

The best medicines are the cheapest: sunshine, sleep, fresh air and water.

If you suspect Infectious Disease don't wait and see, call in your Doctor at once.

In any case of difficulty or doubt consult your Health Department; it is at your service.

